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SIPDIS

STATE FOR WGSARS, OES/PCI, WHA/CAN (RUNNING)

HHS FOR OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY, OFFICE OF
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (STEIGER)

CDC for Global Health Office (Cox)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [TBIO](#) [AMED](#) [CA](#) [SARS](#)

SUBJECT: WGSARS: Canada-wide Status Report April 25
(Number 7)

Ref. (A) Ottawa 1155 (SARS Canada-wide Report #6)

(B) Toronto 1210(Ontario SARS Update #17)

Summary

1. Health Canada provides domestic travel advisory with the message: "It's safe to come to Toronto"; federal cabinet to meet in Toronto on April 29 to lead by example. Total cases in Ontario continue to drop, but there has been an increase in suspect cases in British Columbia. End summary.

Domestic Travel Advisory

2. In an unprecedented step, on April 25, Health Canada issued a domestic travel advisory regarding SARS and Toronto. The text reads "Health Canada advises Canadians that travel to any destination in Canada is safe and may be undertaken in the same manner as one usually would with respect to transport, accommodation, meals, entertainment, business and family engagements, whether arriving from overseas or traveling domestically".

3. Health Canada does not normally issue travel advice with respect to domestic travel. Canadian Health authorities believe, however, that this domestic travel advice will provide Canadians with the most accurate assessment of the Canadian SARS situation. The Travel Advice can be accessed at:

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgspsp/tmp-pmv/2003/sarsdomestic_e.html

4. For the first time since the WHO Travel Advisory was released, Prime Minister Chretien made remarks on SARS. In his April 25 remarks in Ottawa at a Genome Science exposition, Chretien noted that Canada is working in close partnership with the United States Centers for Disease Control and that Canada is very appreciative of the CDC effort.

5. He noted too, the fact that the GoC believes that the World Health Organization came to the wrong conclusion and that Toronto is a safe city. Chretien announced a "marketing campaign for Toronto and Ontario and indeed all of Canada" to demonstrate there is no threat. The GoC will contribute C\$10 million to the effort.

6. Moreover, the federal cabinet will meet in Toronto on April 29 to demonstrate in a very public way the GoC commitment to not let fears about SARS prevail. The PM will also stay Monday night at a Toronto hotel.

SARS Figures

7. As of 13:00 Eastern Daylight Saving Time, April 24, 2003 Health Canada has received reports of 327 probable or suspect cases of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in Canada (A net increase Canada-wide of 1 case since our Report #6). There have been 16 deaths attributed to SARS linked to the Toronto nexus. To date, transmission has been limited to specific transmission settings such as households, hospitals and specific community settings. The details of the cases to date are as follows:

-- Ontario is reporting 136 probable and 121 suspect cases. This is a decrease of 1 suspect case since Report #6. (See Toronto reporting for greater detail.)

-- British Columbia is reporting 4 probable and 54 suspect cases. This is an increase of 7 suspect cases since Report #6. See paragraph 4.

-- New Brunswick is reporting 2 suspect cases. (No change.)

-- Saskatchewan is reporting 1 suspect case. (No change.)

-- Alberta is reporting 5 suspect cases. (No change)

-- Prince Edward Island is reporting 4 suspect cases. (No change.)

18. The new suspect cases in British Columbia (BC) were passengers on the flight from New Delhi via Taipei that arrived in Vancouver on April 19. In an April 24 press release Dr. Monika Naus of the BC Centre for Disease Control noted that "There are many causes for fever and cough in a returning traveler, India is not considered a SARS-affected area by the World Health Organization and there was only a brief stopover in Taipei. The risk may be low that these individuals have SARS, but we don't want to take any chances. If there are other passengers who were on this flight who are ill, we want to know about it."

19. In the press release Naus states "We have been notified of 10 people in eight different families who have reported these symptoms. Two have been hospitalized (Ref A) but none have required ICU care or assistance to breathe." "We are asking that any other passengers with flu-like illness who were on these flights call ahead and notify their personal doctor. Their doctor should then notify public health."

10. The BC Centre for Disease Control will be directly contacting residents of B.C. who were on the China Air flight. Passengers who may have gone on to other provinces will be notified by that province.

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